

**Memorandum of the Meeting  
Twenty-Seventh Town Council  
Regular Study Session  
Monday, April 16, 2012**

The Highland Town Council met in its standing regular study session on Monday, April 16, 2012 at 7:07 o'clock p.m. in the regular place, the plenary meeting chambers of the Highland Municipal Building.

*Silent Roll Call:* Councilors Bernie Zemen; Dan Vassar; Brian Novak; and Konnie Kuiper were all present. Councilor Mark Herak arrived at 7:12 o'clock p.m., delayed by his work commute. A quorum was established.

The Clerk-Treasurer, Michael W. Griffin, was present to memorialize the meeting.

*Also present:* Rhett Tauber, Town Attorney; Cecile Petro, Redevelopment Director; Pete Hojnicky and Mike Maloney, of the Redevelopment Commission were also present.

**General Substance of Matters Discussed**

1. The Town Council discussed with the Redevelopment Director, the Redevelopment Commissioner, and the Town Attorney the vacant properties in Highland. The Town Council President identified the properties such as the former sites of Abrahamson Chrysler and Shaver Pontiac. It was noted that these properties were dormant for a long period of time. The discussion included whether the Council could compel the sale of properties and the instances in which adverse condemnation (eminent domain) may be used. The discussion included instances in which the private owners are listing the property for a price higher than the market value, contributing to its continued vacancy.

The discussion included an exploration of a proposed code modification, generated by the Redevelopment staff that is currently in review that was suggested as a remedy for some of the concerns regarding the long vacant properties. The Redevelopment Director described some of the provisions in the proposed modified code for vacant and abandoned commercial, office or industrial structures or lots.

It was noted that the Redevelopment staff was completing its review of the commercial properties in the town, and considering whether some parcels may require bundling. It was suggested that perhaps the legislature could be invited to consider legislation allowing the tax assessment to be equal to the asking price by an owner of vacant properties.

In addition to the foregoing, other properties such as the former Chela's Restaurant, the site of the former Finke's Bar, and the former offices of the Girl Scouts of the Calumet Council were discussed as properties that have been vacant for a protracted period.

The included consideration of employing the unsafe building law upon the building on the site of the former Finke's Bar and the building on the site of the former Chela's Restaurant. The discussion included considering strict enforcement of the code provisions as a strategy for addressing the issue of vacant or abandoned buildings. It was noted that the proposed code was under review by the Building Commissioner.

Mr. Maloney and the Redevelopment Director departed at this time.

2. The Town Attorney distributed a draft of a modification to the section of the Animal Code, dealing with dangerous dogs. The Town Council, the Metropolitan Police Chief and the Town Attorney discussed the draft as presented. The Metropolitan Police Chief discussed the

incidents of ordinance enforcement was conducted at the 3010 98<sup>th</sup> Street West discussed in the previous plenary business meeting regarding an uncontrolled dangerous dog. If adopted, the draft provided a new provision denying a dangerous dog license for two years if the dog has been determined to be a dangerous dog. It was suggested that the proposed amendment be made ready for an introduction on Monday, April 23, the next plenary business meeting.

3. The Town Council discussed the number of warnings notices compared to actual citations in the monthly code enforcement report contained in the Building and Inspection Report. The discussion included whether the number of actual citations should increase on property maintenance and aesthetic issues.

The discussion included concern about the color mix and choices on a fence located with a residence at the intersection of Liable Road and 41<sup>st</sup> Street. The issue of aesthetic regulation was discussed and whether an ordinance could be adopted dealing with that issue.

4. The Town Council discussed the latest iteration of the Parade regulatory ordinance, comprising sections 71.25 through 71.99. The Metropolitan Police Chief offered an overview of the proposed changes.
5. The Town Council and the Clerk-Treasurer discussed the status of the draft of the wage and salary ordinance providing for retroactivity until the start of the year. The discussion included whether the proposed increase would apply beyond full-time employees. Further, the discussion included whether the Town Council would consider not seeking retroactivity to the start of the year. The process for implementation was described by the Clerk-Treasurer.
6. The Town Council discussed the issue of weekend code enforcement and the Tree Contractor Services that are performing work without the require license. The discussion included the manner of collecting payment on weekends for enforcement.

It was suggested that the Fire Chief and the Building Commissioner be invited for the next study session to discuss issues of code enforcement and the manner of weekend collection of fees to issue permits, in addition to determining the extension of the raises to certain recurrent part-time workers in these departments.

There being no further business to discuss, the regular study session of Monday, April 16, 2012 was adjourned at 8:14 O'clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA  
Clerk-Treasurer